

Presbyterian Church (Masonic Temple)
Clifton Townsite
Park Avenue
Clifton
Greenlee County
Arizona

HABS No. AZ-193

HABS
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6-CLIFT,
23-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94107

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
(Masonic Temple)

HABS No. AZ-193

Location:

Clifton Townsite, Park Avenue, Clifton, Greenlee County, Arizona

Significance:

Associated with the development of Clifton. Also an unusual example of a combination of Mission Revival architecture with Bungalow style elements.

Description:

The Presbyterian Church is a one-story Mission Revival style structure with many details apparently influenced by the Bungalow style. The plan is roughly rectangular, with an off-center bell tower as the focus. The building is constructed of granite with a stucco finish. The roof is a side gable with knee braces to support the eaves. The bell tower has a hipped roof with knee braces at the eaves and arched openings at the top; the main entry is found at the base. A run of concrete steps leads up from the street to the main floor level, where a gabled entry stoop protects the arched wood doors to the building. At the southeast end, the gable is broken by a curvilinear parapet. A similar parapet is found on the southwest front, adjacent to the bell tower. Most of the windows are double-hung wood windows with a 12-over-1 pattern. Concrete lintels and sills project out at each window.

History:

The Presbyterian Church was constructed in 1918 and completed in 1919. It was used as the Presbyterian Church in Clifton from that time until 1975, when the interior of the building was modified for its conversion to use as a lodge hall for the Masonic Temple.

The Reverend James A. Menaul organized the first Presbyterian congregation in Clifton in 1889. This early group numbered twelve members. Church meetings were held in halls and private homes. By the turn of the century the congregation had grown and Clifton could support a dedicated building for a church. Officials of the Arizona Copper Company, many of whom were Presbyterians, encouraged the strengthening of religion in Clifton by donating \$500 and a lot for a building site in 1902. This wood frame church was completed in North Clifton in 1903.¹

The old church in North Clifton served its members well for many years, but by 1917 the Presbyterian congregation began to feel that a new facility was overdue. Clifton had grown and prospered, as had the Presbyterian Church, and the old building was no longer adequate for the size of the congregation. The members also wanted a more central location for their church since the population center of Clifton had shifted toward the south. In March of 1917 the Board of Trustees of the Clifton Presbyterian Church decided to construct a new building. The trustees quickly set about raising funds and soon declared they were only \$1,000 short of their goal.²

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The entrance of the United States into World War I delayed construction of the church because of wartime restrictions on building materials and increased prices. The \$9,000 the trustees had raised by April of 1917 was not enough to build the church. After the war, the trustees took up fund raising once again. The new cost of the church was now set at \$12,000. The trustees broke ground for the new church in June of 1918. They contracted with J.L. Westerman of El Paso to build the church. Westerman estimated he would finish the job in five months. The new building would be constructed with granite stone covered with stucco. The church measured 52 by 70 feet, with a main floor and basement. The main floor consisted of a 33 by 33 feet auditorium. The basement contained two classrooms, a large dining room, a kitchen, furniture room, pantry, storage room, and a room for organ machinery.³

Contractor Westerman kept to his schedule and by January of 1919 Pastor Curry H. Love was making preparations for a housewarming in the new building. Love noted that the centrally located church building would have all the "modern conveniences" such as class rooms and social rooms heated with hot water. The formal dedication of the church took place on Easter Sunday in 1920. The Reverend George Logie of Phoenix, described by a contemporary as "the greatest preacher in the southwest," officiated at the impressive dedication service.⁴

Reverend Love did not stay long to enjoy the new building. In December of 1920 his wife died, leaving him with a three-year old daughter to raise. By September of 1921, with Clifton hard hit by the decline in copper prices, Rev. Love decided that a change was in order. After twenty years of service to the oldest church congregation in Clifton, Rev. Love left for Oregon. Although he returned to Arizona in 1924, serving as the pastor of the Tucson Presbyterian Church, his visits to Clifton were few as the congregation struggled to maintain its membership through the boom and bust cycle of the copper industry.⁵

The Presbyterian Church of Clifton persevered through tough times but by 1975 the building no longer served their needs. The Coronado-Corinthian Lodge No. 8, F. & A. M. acquired the building for use as a Masonic Temple. The Masons modified the interior of the building to accommodate lodge use by adding restrooms, a drinking fountain, and a through hallway to the exit.⁶

Sources (endnotes):

1. James A. Menaul, "New Mexico and Arizona," Church at Home and Abroad VII (June 1890): 522; Copper Era November 20, 1902 (I, 3: 1); October 21, 1919 (I, 6: 1).
2. Copper Era March 16, 1917 (I, 1: 3).
3. Copper Era June 7, 1918 (I, 1: 4). The building committee for the Presbyterian Church consisted of John M. Mason, L.L. Fitz, and W.J. Riley. These men were assisted by P.A. Niblock and George A. Wagstaff.
4. Copper Era January 3, 1919 (I, 5: 4); April 2, 1920 (I, 5: 2).
5. Copper Era December 17, 1920 (I, 1: 6); September 23, 1921 (I, 1: 6); November 7, 1924 (I, 8: 1-2).
6. Arizona State Historic Property Inventory form Greenlee County no. 29, prepared by Lester E. Mims, June 20, 1983, on file at the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office, Phoenix.

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Historian: Robert G. Graham AIA, Ryden Architects, Historical Architect/Project Coordinator

Douglas Kupel, Consulting Historian

Ryden Architects
645 North 4th Avenue, Suite A
Phoenix, AZ 85003

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